

Application No. 09/856,407
Amendment Date: 10-25-01
Reply to Office Action of May 14, 2003

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed May 14, 2003 has been carefully considered.

The examiner has objected to Figures 15 and 16 of the drawings. In particular, the examiner has requested that the captions be deleted. Applicant's attorney does not understand this request, as the Figures 15 and 16 with the captions that were filed with the communication dated October 25, 2001 were provided only to indicate a translation of the foreign language text. These figures were not intended to be substitute drawings. The foreign language text on the original drawings are not relevant to the invention and only are presented for ornamental purposes on the various items. It is respectfully submitted that the original drawings are in compliance with the U.S.P.T.O. rules. Please advise as to whether substitute drawings should be filed without ornamentation.

Claim 22, which corresponds to original claim 8, has been changed to identify polyethylene.

In order to facilitate the prosecution of this application, claims 1-15 have been cancelled and new claims 16-27 have been added.

The claims, as originally filed, were rejected under 25 U.S.C. § 102 and/or 8,103 in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,555,475 (Maunz) alone and/or in combination with U.S. Patent No. 5,435,787 (Ratcliffe) and U.S. Patent No. 5,836,017 (Hironaza et al.). In view of the following discussions of these references, it is submitted that claims 16-27 are patentable over the teachings in these references.

Maunz discloses an artificial palm tree that includes a support for artificial palm leaves. The support includes a plurality of supporting rods secured at one end circularly bundled by a common supporting base. However, Maunz does not refer to flower bouquets nor to supporting non-floral items therein. Maunz concentrates on simulating the structure of a natural palm tree by fixing artificial leaves to a metal base structure.

Ratcliffe discloses a novelty device that may include a gift item. Ratcliffe is a cube-shaped container that is adapted to emit a sharp, explosive sound when being

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opened by an operator. Ratcliffe does not refer to flower bouquets, nor does it refer to supporting non-floral items, e. g. gift items.

Hironaza discloses a corsage to be attached to a wearer's garment. A steel wire structure is provided to fix flower parts to the garment. Hironaza does not refer to bouquets of flowers or to the fixing of non-floral items therein.

None of these prior art references disclose a device that includes a combination of a bouquet of flowers and a support for non-floral items.

Independent claim 16 defines a bouquet of flowers that includes a bundle of floral items in combination with a support for non-floral items that is integrated within the bouquet. The support comprises a plurality of bendable supporting rods that are secured at one end and circularly bundled by a common supporting base. At least one non-floral item is secured to one of the supporting rods and thereby supported in the bouquet.

It is most apparent that none of the cited prior art references even remotely disclose this combination of elements. In particular, none of these references disclose or teach the inclusion of circularly bundled rods that are included in a bouquet of flowers and clasped in a bundle of floral stems.

Claims 17-27 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 16 and further they define the invention. Claims 17-27 are patentable for the same reasons discussed above with respect to claim 16 and in view of the additional limitations set forth in these claims.

In view thereof, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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